

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 RANGOO 01959 220705Z

12

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03

RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 AID-20 RSR-01 /066 W

----- 017990

R 220610Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7127

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 1959

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR TH BM XC

SUBJECT: THAI/BURMESE HIGH LEVEL COMMITTEE MEETING

REF: A. RANGOON 1939 B. RANGOON 1859

BEGIN SUMMARY. MEETING IN RANGOON AUGUST 17 OF THAI-BURMESE HIGH LEVEL COMMITTEE REPRESENTS MOST RECENT AND WELL PUBLICIZED EXPRESSION OF THAWING RELATIONS BETWEEN THAILAND AND GUB. UNDERSTANDABLY BOTH SIDES AGREED THAT THIS RESUMPTION OF HIGH LEVEL MEETINGS WILL REQUIRE YET FURTHER MEETINGS BEFORE SEVERAL BASIC ISSUES DIVIDING THE TWO ARE JOINED, IF NOT RESOLVED. BUT GOOD START WAS APPARENTLY MADE ON NARCOTICS, GUN SMUGGLING ALONG BORDER, AND FISHING BOAT PROBLEMS. PERHAPS MOST NOTABLE ASPECT OF TALKS IS THEIR MOOD OF BILATERAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN RTG AND GUB AS FURTHER STEP BY BURMA INTO MORE OPEN FOREIGN POLICY STANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. ALTHOUGH FEW DETAILS OF AUGUST 17 BURMESE-THAI HIGH LEVEL COMMITTEE TALKS AVAILABLE (AS USUAL, BURMESE OFFICIALS ARE UNCOMMUNICATIVE WHEN HIGH LEVELS INVOLVED) APPEARS FROM PRESS REPORTS HERE AND IN BANGKOK THAT MAIN TOPICS DISCUSSED WERE NARCOTICS, GUN SMUGGLING ALONG BORDER, AND FISHING BOAT PROBLEMS. COMMENTS BY MARSHAL DAWEI IN OPENING SPEECH THAT SOME BILATERAL PROBLEMS "NEED MORE TIME AND GREATER PATIENCE" AND BY BURMESE FONMIN KYAW SOE IN CLOSING SPEECH THAT SOME MATTERS "NEED TO BE

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PAGE 02 RANGOO 01959 220705Z

THRASHED OUT MORE THOROUGHLY BEFORE WE REACH CONSENSUS" INDICATE

FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS WILL BE REQUIRED TO REACH FULL AGREEMENT ON THESE PROBLEMS.

2. BOTH SIDES NEVERTHELESS APPEAR HIGHLY PLEASED BY TALKS, RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR'S QUERY AS TO HOW TALKS HAD GONE FONMIN KYAW SOE REPLIED "VERY GOOD, VERY GOOD." KYAW SOE ADDED THAT MARSHAL DAWEE WAS A FINE MAN, A SURPRISING AND ENCOURAGING COMMENT IN VIEW OF EARLIER REPORTS THAT DAWEE NOT HIGHLY REGARDED IN HIGH GUB CIRCLES. THAI MILITARY ATTACHE ALSO TOLD DEFENSE ATTACHE THAT TALKS WENT VERY WELL.

3. EVIDENCE OF IMPORTANCE PLACED ON TALKS BY GUB IS ABUNDANT, INCLUDING EFFUSIVE TONE OF KYAW SOE'S CLOSING SPEECH AND EXTENSIVE FRONT PAGE COVERAGE GIVEN TO MEETING IN BURMESE PRESS. ALTHOUGH GUB DID NOT PUBLISH NAMES OF ITS DELEGATION MEMBERS, IT WAS CLEARLY A HIGH-LEVEL GROUP. PRESS PHOTOS INDICATED THAT GUB REPRESENTATIVES LISTED IN REF B PARTICIPATED. FACT THAT NE WIN GAVE DINNER FOR THAI DELEGATION ON EVE HIS DEPARTURE FOR EUROPE INDICATED IMPORTANCE WITH WHICH HE VIEWED MEETING.

4. MAIN IMPETUS FOR HOLDING TALKS EVIDENTLY CAME FROM BURMESE SIDE, SINCE DAWEE REFERRED TO "DECISION OF THE BURMESE GOVERNMENT TO REACTIVATE THE BORDER COMMITTEE." BOTH GUB AND THAI EMBASSY SOURCES INDICATED PRIVATELY THAT KYAW SOE WANTED THAI DELEGATION TO STAY ADDITIONAL DAY FOR FURTHER TALKS AMC GOLF BUT THAT DAWEE PLEADED ENGAGEMENT IN THAILAND NECESSITATING HIS RETURN ON AUG 18.

5. FON MIN INDICATED TO AMBASSADOR THAT NEXT MEETING OF COMMITTEE WOULD BE HELD AFTER SEPTEMBER BUT BEFORE END OF YEAR.

6. COMMENT: GUB INITIATIVE TO REVIVE THAI-BURMA BORDER TALKS AFTER DECADE'S LAPSE AND AGREEMENT TO SECOND MEETING BEFORE END OF YEAR IS ENCOURAGING EVIDENCE OF EXTENT TO WHICH BURMESE FOREIGN POLICY HAS OPENED OUTWARDS SINCE BEGINNING OF YEAR. DESPITE CONTINUED RELUCTANCE TO JOIN SUCH FORMAL GROUPINGS AS ASEAN, GUB CLEARLY HAS ACTIVE INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING IN AFFAIRS OF REGION AND IN DEVELOPING CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH RTG.

7. FOR BANGKOK: SINCE IT IS CLEAR THAT GUB ANTICIPATED THAIS WOULD STAY DAY LONGER, WOULD APPRECIATE BANGKOK'S COMMENT ON CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 RANGOO 01959 220705Z

POSSIBLE REASON FOR THAI DELEGATION'S EARLY DEPARTURE.  
MARTIN

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 22 AUG 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1973RANGOO01959  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS MARTIN  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** n/a  
**From:** RANGOON  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1973/newtext/t19730822/aaaaaqcw.tel  
**Line Count:** 109  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE  
**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** A. RANGOON 1939 B. RANGOON 1859  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** golinofr  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 14 NOV 2001  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <14-Nov-2001 by martinml>; APPROVED <13-Dec-2001 by golinofr>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** THAI/BURMESE HIGH LEVEL COMMITTEE MEETING  
**TAGS:** PFOR, TH, BM, XC  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005